Family Focus is off to a great start in FY 19. It is hard to imagine just how much the environment in which Family Focus operates has changed since the state budget crisis one year ago.

This year is bringing opportunities to increase services to reach more families, add staff, and participate in new programs to test exciting theories of change to benefit Illinois families.

Our seven centers and staff are being recognized as valued partners in the communities we serve. We are grateful for your partnership.

Warm regards,

Sherneron Hilliard, Vice President of Early Childhood Development and Programs, announced two major grants received by Family Focus. “These expanded grant awards are a reflection of the depth of relationships we have established in the community and our success in generating positive outcomes that strengthen families. It showcases the dedication and determination of our entire staff to serve families. It’s a remarkable opportunity to increase our impact throughout the greater Chicagoland area.”

$3,475,530 Grant Awarded for Illinois State Board of Education Prevention Initiative Program, an increase of $1,618,367

Family Focus’s fiscal year 2019 grant award from the Illinois State Board of Education Prevention Initiative program (ISBE PI) increased from $1,857,163 in FY 2018 to $3,475,530. The expanded grant will enable Family Focus to serve 1,459 children with early childhood services in FY 2019. The grant supports early childhood development including doula (birth coach) services at all seven Family Focus centers. Doulas provide emotional, physical and educational support for a mother before, during, and after childbirth. They advise on topics such as prenatal health, breast feeding, and more.

After birth, participants continue to work one-on-one with Family Focus staff through home visiting and other programs. More than 1,100 families receive education about child-parent bonding activities, socio-emotional, language, and fine and gross motor skills development, and more. Our centers bring families together to build supportive networks while offering educational activities and referrals to meet individual family needs.

$895,000 Grant Awarded for Sustainable Community Schools Project

Family Focus was selected to participate in a $895,000 Sustainable Community Schools (SCS) grant pilot project, funded by Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Chicago Teachers Union. Family Focus will partner with the Fort Dearborn Elementary School in Englewood and Oscar DePriest Elementary School in Austin. DePriest and Fort Dearborn were two of twenty CPS school selected from 68 applicants, and Family Focus is one of 17 social service organizations chosen to participate in the program. (Continued on page 2).

Family Focus Selected to Participate in Community Saturation Research Project

Family Focus is participating in research for a new initiative in two communities to test the impact of increased levels of support for primary caregivers and their impact on children’s school readiness. The project is funded by a partnership with Chicago foundations, community leaders, educators and nonprofit organizations.

Family Focus is working on the six-month planning stage of the project, providing oversight and the identification of key deliverables.
FAMILY FOCUS CENTER UPDATES:

**Evanston**
The Grandparents Raising Grandchildren group was featured as one of three stories in Pamela Sherrod Anderson’s *The G Force*, a documentary that follows grandparents raising their grandchildren. The film was shown at the Gene Siskel Film Center as part of the Black Harvest Film Festival in August.

**DuPage**
Family Focus DuPage recently held its annual picnic at Cantigny Park in Wheaton, IL. The afternoon included lunch, games, a prize raffle, and a workshop on developing parenting skills. It also allowed families and children to interact in a fun environment.

**Sustainable Community Schools (SCS)** (continued from page 1)
The SCS model recognizes that transformative services for students result in sustainable changes to the way we think about educating the whole child—with family and community partner involvement at the core.

The grant is to be shared between Family Focus and the school to determine the best practices for utilizing the funds. The school’s principal, select teachers, parents, students, community leaders and a Family Focus staff member will create a program plan based on the school’s needs. Key components of each program will be parent and community engagement, and services offered during the school day and after school. It could fund such components as a parent liaison, expanded curriculum materials, trauma counseling, social/emotional learning activities, teacher training, expanded research and data collection to support best practices moving forward.

**Roots Aurora 2018**
On September 9th, 2018 Roots Aurora celebrated its 6th anniversary, bringing the Aurora community together through dance, music, art and food to connect as neighbors in a global community. It celebrates the positive impact of immigrants. Aurora residents Ed Schleining, owner of the Wurst Kitchen, and Gonzalo Arroyo, former Director of Family Focus Aurora, were honored as Cultural Champions. For more pictures visit our Facebook page:

https://www.facebook.com/familyfocus.org/

City of Cicero Wins the Robert Wood Johnson Culture of Health Prize

The city of Cicero, IL is one of four winners of the 2018 Culture of Health Prize awarded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The prize was awarded to the Cicero Community Collaborative. Family Focus’ Nuestra Familia is a member of the collaborative, and Family Focus Vice President of Centers, Mariana Osoria, is Co-Chair. This is the first time a city in Illinois has won this national award.

The Cicero Community Collaborative was started in 2007 as a response to gang violence. It has grown into a platform defining community needs and taking action to give everyone a chance at a healthier life. The collaborative includes community members and 23 partner organizations.

John Lumpkin, Senior Vice President at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, said, “We were most impressed with the ways Cicero brought the community together with safer and better opportunities for all families, from education to home visiting to the police to social services. Too many kids start off behind and stay behind the rest of their lives.”
Family Focus Selected to Participate in Bridgespan Consulting Project

Family Focus was honored by the Bridgespan Group to be selected to participate in its “Leading for Impact” consulting project. Funded by such nationally recognized foundations as the Pritzker Foundation, The Pritzker Traubart Family Foundation, and the Polk Bros. Foundation, participation is by invitation only.

Nonprofits are selected for a two-year, intensive program designed to strengthen the ability of mission-driven organizations to achieve breakthrough results in addressing society’s most important challenges and opportunities. Family Focus’ senior staff will participate as a team in the project.

Building our Endowment — Join the Bernice Weissbourd Legacy Circle

Create your own legacy for children and families by joining other donors who have made the decision to become part of the Bernice Weissbourd Legacy Circle. These dedicated donors join the Legacy Circle by pledging now to include Family Focus in their will and estate plans. Funds remain protected in perpetuity with the interest each year funding critical programs.

Nearly 50 years ago, Family Focus was founded on the break-through principle that the way to nurture children is to strengthen families. Every family needs and deserves help, support, and access to resources.

Combining knowledge about child development, family systems, and the impact of communities on families, Family Focus has grown into a nationally-recognized social service organization serving children and families throughout the greater Chicago region by:

- **Helping parents** to establish positive relationships, including attachment to a child; capacity to cope with stresses of daily life and proactively access resources and support.
- **Building social connections with** friends, family members, neighbors, and others who provide emotional support and assistance to parents and families.
- **Educating families** with accurate information about child development, appropriate developmental expectations, and knowledge of “best practice” parenting techniques.
- **Supporting children’s social and emotional development** to increase a child’s ability to interact positively with others and communicate his or her emotions effectively.

Download the Bernice Weissbourd Legacy Circle brochure on our website or call Steve Majsak, Senior VP of External Relations, for more information at 312-777-1923 or by email at steve.majsak@family-focus.org.

“Fundamentally, if we’re interested in the well-being of children, we need to be interested in the well-being of families.”

- Bernice Weissbourd

Your participation in the Bernice Weissbourd Legacy Circle will ensure that successful programs will continue to change lives for generations to come.

Congratulations to the Associate Board on their summer event!

In August, 70 guests joined the Family Focus’ Associate Board for its summer fundraiser at Revolution Brewing to raise money for the Baby Bucks incentive program at Family Focus DuPage. Event attendees bid on raffle items and played trivia about how much it costs to raise a child in Illinois. The event raised more than $2,500 for the program, which provides critical baby items to Family Focus participants. For information about the Associate Board, contact Kelsey Miklos at 312-777-1918 or by email at kelsey.miklos@family-focus.org.
Event Spotlight: Family Focus Staff Picnic

Staff and families from all seven centers and administration office gathered to put the family in Family Focus with a summer picnic.

For more photos, visit the Family Focus go to our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/familyfocus.org/